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# United States Department of Agriculture,

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## GRASS MIXTURE FOR HAY FOR SECTIONS SOUTH OF THE TIMOTHY REGION.

The mixture described here is composed of orchard grass, tall meadow oat-grass, and alsike clover in the following proportions by weight: Orchard grass, two; tall meadow oat-grass, two; alsike clover, one. This mixture is especially valuable for sections south of the timothy region from Maryland west to Kentucky and south to the lower end of the Piedmont section. It is of most importance as a hay mixture, but also furnishes good pasturage, especially early and late in the season. It outyields timothy in the above region and makes a good quality of hay. The following is a short description of the grasses composing this mixture:

*Orchard grass.*—Orchard grass is a hardy perennial grass known generally throughout the United States. Its stems are upright and its leaves abundant and inclined to be somewhat coarse. Orchard grass does not produce rootstocks and hence does not form a close sod. It attains the most importance in Kentucky, southern Indiana, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland, and is adapted to a great variety of soils.

*Tall meadow oat-grass.*—Tall meadow oat-grass, sometimes called tall oat-grass, oat-grass, or evergreen grass, is a hardy perennial grass growing upright to the height of 15 to 30 inches, usually producing a considerable quantity of leaves all the way up the stem. Although a tall grass it is by no means coarse. It does not propagate by rootstocks and is somewhat inclined to be bunchy. It produces seed in an open head, or panicle, somewhat similar to cultivated oats, though the seed is much smaller and chaffier than oats. This grass makes a very satisfactory growth on poor clay soils and it is steadily coming into use.

*Alsike clover.*—Alsike clover is a perennial clover, in general intermediate in size and appearance between the common red clover and white clover. The leafy branches while not as coarse as those of red clover commonly reach the height of 18 inches, and even more on moist rich soils. The blossoms resemble those of the white clover more closely than those of the red clover and are of a light pink color.

Alsike clover is a valuable honey-producing plant and is often grown for this purpose. It is widely distributed throughout the United States and its use is steadily increasing. On lands which refuse to grow red clover it is being grown with considerable success.

*Seeding.*—This mixture can be seeded to best advantage early in the fall, during the latter part of August or the first week of September. Later seeding than this would be likely to result in failure of the alsike clover on account of winterkilling. Seeding is recommended without a nurse crop, and if the grass gets a reasonable start in the fall it will make a crop of hay the following spring.

Twelve pounds of orchard grass, twelve pounds of tall meadow oat-grass, and six pounds of alsike clover per acre are recommended for this mixture. On account of the difference in character in these seeds, difficulty may be experienced in sowing them as a mixture. It is advisable to sow the orchard grass and tall meadow oat-grass together and the clover afterwards. As the seed of tall meadow oat-grass is very light and chaffy it is generally considered best to sow the seed broadcast. This insures more even distribution.

An important point in getting a satisfactory stand of this mixture is to have the ground well plowed and thoroughly settled below the surface. The surface layer of soil should be fine and loose in order to facilitate an even covering. After sowing, the seed should be covered very lightly by an ordinary drag harrow, or a weeder if the latter is available.

By seeding at the rate above suggested and by cutting the grass just as it begins to bloom, a very palatable and nutritious quality of hay can be secured.

This grass mixture is especially valuable for ridding a meadow of weeds, notably such weeds as white-top and oxeye daisy. Since the grasses are cut for hay before the weeds have had time to mature seed, a meadow of this mixture will after a few years' cutting become remarkably clean.

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